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ABSTRACT

Part of a series for early years teachers in Scotland, this guide focuses on ways to provide creative opportunities that support and enhance child development. The guide discusses how to respect children's creativity while observing and developing their skills and suggests practical and creative alternatives to the mass production of identical pieces of work in early years centers and schools. The guide examines the role of creative play and the arts in early learning, helps staff gain confidence in their own creative activities, suggests ways of planning activities, and offers suggestions for arranging the environment. Further, the guide shows how young children and staff can benefit from contacts with the arts and their work, and explains how to arrange an artist-in-residence project at an early years center or school. The guide also offers advice in how to make the most of a visit to an art gallery, theater, or sculpture park and points out where to start in funding these projects. Case studies and photographs of successful creative projects are interspersed throughout the guide to illustrate how a variety of organizations have used the suggestions with young children. The guide concludes with lists of publishers specializing in materials for children, a reference list, and contact information for relevant groups and organizations. Contains a 26-item list of sources for further reading. (KB)

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EARLY EDUCATION SUPPORT

Seeing, Making, Doing

Creative Development in Early Years Settings

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Seeing, Making, Doing

Creative Development in Early Years Settings

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INTRODUCTION

Art is to humankind what dreams are to individuals.
Art is a revelation of the collective human soul.

Isabel Allende

This publication is both practical and theoretical. It offers practical advice to help staff from nurseries and early years centres to provide creative opportunities that support and enhance child development. It talks about how to respect children's creativity whilst observing and developing their skills. It suggests practical and creative alternatives to the mass production of identical pieces of work in early years centres and schools.

Seeing, Making, Doing offers practical support to practitioners by:

- looking at why creative play and the arts are such important components of early learning
- helping staff to gain more confidence in their own creative activities
- suggesting ways of planning activities
- offering ideas, techniques and ways to rearrange an environment
- showing how young children and staff can benefit from contacts with artists and their work, and explaining how to set up an artist-in-residence project at an early years centre or school
- offering advice in how to make the most of a visit to an arts venue like a gallery, theatre or sculpture park
- pointing out where to start in the search for funding for these projects.

Case studies and photographs of successful creative projects are interspersed throughout, to show how a variety of organisations have actually used these ideas with young children.

This publication is not intended to be used in isolation. Staff will be able to interpret and adapt the ideas and suggestions to suit their own settings and make use of the experiences illustrated by the case studies. The information in *Seeing, Making, Doing* can be used as a starting point from which to work. It aims to inspire staff to take more creative risks, to be prepared to push the boundaries of what children can achieve and to devise an imaginative curriculum for three- to eight-year-olds.

SECTION ONE: THE VALUE OF CREATIVITY

Creative expression is an essential part of a healthy society.
It's an essential part of a healthy community and the healthy individual.

Steven Durland, *Art in the Public Interest*

What does creativity do? Creativity allows individual children to:

- gain confidence – in their activities and in general
- learn various skills – not just those related to the tasks in which they are involved
- express their emotions, feelings, thoughts and ideas
- communicate those emotions, feelings, thoughts and ideas to others
- experiment with new techniques and materials and with what they already know
- develop their own identity and individuality – a sense of self and how they are different from other children, adults, carers and family members
- collaborate with others – contribute to and participate in a group
- use their imaginations, hopes, wishes, flights of fancy
- get excited by something, get involved, absorbed or engaged
- ask questions and use their natural curiosity
- take time, make judgements and put in the required effort
- celebrate anything in their world that seems important
- and – most importantly – have fun.

How does creativity manage to do this? It opens up our minds and offers us choices and options, allowing us to change direction, to be flexible and free.

Children are naturally creative and imaginative. Curiosity and inquisitiveness are part of their make-up and they are eager to encounter sensations – to hear, feel, find, touch and taste. As babes develop and learn, their whole being is creative:

- they investigate things by putting them first into their mouths
- they make shapes with their bodies, with their toys, with their food
- they make noises and gestures
- they learn how to make all of these things have meaning.

Young children have their own language of thought through which they can understand the world:

- they are unselfconscious and open to every sensation
- they respond to soothing music
- they can recognise when something is wrong with them.

These sensations are communicated first through gesture, movement, shouting and mimicking – and later by playing and pretending, rhythm, singing and dancing, drawing and telling stories, shaping and modelling.

Children learn from everything they see and hear in the environment around them; learning goes on everywhere, not just in 'activities'.[1]

[1] *Guidelines to Practice in the Early Years*, London Borough of Haringey Education Services

The way adults think about and look at things is very different from the way children do. Most adults prefer representative art or decorative end products: landscapes that could really exist, trees that look like trees, dancers who dance as smoothly and gracefully as a prima ballerina.

For children it is different. 'Hand in hand in the child's world go imagination and reality, light and shadow, dance and music, near and far, black and white. For adults, reality has become fragmented and complex ... but the small child examines the world as many large wholes.'[2] Children's perception and perspective allow them to paint or creative what they think, to move or dance in the way they feel and to act as they imagine.

Professional artists often strive to recapture this childlike creativity, to feel and experience their art and to represent true expressions.

What is creativity?

> *Creativity is about making new things, things that did not exist before. It is about the individual expression of emotions, ideas, desires. It is about coming up new solutions to existing problems or even about coming up with new problems. It is about leaving conventions behind and going off the beaten track. It is about stimulating* diverging *thinking as opposed to* converging *thinking.*[3]

Early years centres and schools can foster creativity by giving children the opportunity to think, ask and choose for themselves, express their feelings, invent things together, share their ideas and create collaboration. Individual children, with their own hopes and experiences, are unique and curious beings. The task of the adult is to be sensitive and to observe the viewpoints children are presenting, helping to transform their creativity into words and questions. Once children have developed speaking skills, they need to be given the time to ask and answer questions and to be listened to in their answers.

Creativity is an essential part of the whole education process. There are two distinct and different processes:

- creative expression, which reflects imagination, individuality, experimentation and expression of emotion
- use of artistic tools and media – such as paints and brushes, instruments and music, card, egg boxes and glue – which help children to gain skills as balance, control, fine motor skills, confidence and collaboration.

Both of these processes are valuable, but the use of artistic tools and media is not, in itself, a creative activity unless it is allied to creative expression. The two combined are central to children's learning.

[2] *Pre-school education*. STAKES/The National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health (Finland), 1996.

[3] Vendenbroeck, Micale. *Stimulating Creativity in Children: Is it Feasible?* Seminar paper (Athens), 1996.

Case Study

The Magical World of *Pookie* and *The Animal Shelf*: Collins Gallery

The University of Strathclyde's Collins Gallery is especially dedicated to programming for pre-school users. On average, two nursery groups visit the gallery each month, and the staff organise at least one structured activity session for pre-schoolers every year – and would do more if finances permitted.

One such activity programme was built around an exhibition of 150 framed watercolours by internationally acclaimed children's author/illustrator Ivy Wallace; the pictures were Wallace's original illustrations for her *Pookie* and *The Animal Shelf* series of books, which were first published between 1946 and 1967 and still sell well in many countries around the world today.

To make the fantasy worlds of the illustrations more real, the gallery created life-size models of several environments that recur in both series of books, including a toadstool entrance and picnic/reading area with toadstool seats and Astroturf; a 20-foot pond with grassy banks, waterfall and stepping stones; and a reconstruction of Timothy's bedroom, complete with the five *Animal Shelf* characters.

Prior to the actual Wallace workshops, held for both state and private nurseries throughout Strathclyde, copies of the books were sent to all participating groups, and the author herself, who is in her 80s, visited each nursery to chat with the stories. Thus, the children were fully familiar with the stories by the time they visited the gallery and the life-size environments.

During the two-hour workshops, the children, led by a dancer, were encouraged to create their own adventure story for the characters, using movement and percussion instruments and working within the created environments. Then, a sculptor helped the children to manipulate clay into simple forms to make toys, based upon the stories, for themselves.

The workshop leaders and nursery and gallery staff were all highly impressed with the degree of concentration and creativity the children exhibited during the workshops. Gallery staff attribute much of the success of this and subsequent activity programmes to the participation of professional artists and to careful preparatory work – sending out materials to the groups as much as six weeks prior to the workshops and, whenever possible, having someone visit the groups in advance of the workshops to set the stage more fully for the children.

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Why the arts for young children?

> *... one of the basic principles of education is to transmit understanding and appreciation of our culture to succeeding generations. The arts provides us with one of the best ways of sharing our civilisation.*[3]

The arts should be a fundamental element in all children's development and learning:

> *Expressing and creating ideas, feelings and imagination as well as having opportunities to enjoy all manner of sounds, sights, shapes and textures are vital parts of the growing child's development. They contribute to their confidence and self-esteem and add colour and richness to life in the nursery. They contribute to children's learning about themselves and the world and to the development of social, intellectual, physical and communication skills. In developing expressive and aesthetic experiences the emphasis should be on the enjoyment, expression and learning that takes place during the experience rather than the finished products.*
>
> *A Curriculum Framework for Children 3 to 5*, Scottish CCC, 1999

Similarly, the national guidelines on the expressive arts for pupils aged 5–14 state:

> *The expressive arts play an important role in the education of all pupils. They encourage the exploration of values, foster imagination and creativity, develop practical and perceptual skills and promote intellectual and aesthetic development.*[4]

The child's right to creative experiences

> 1. *Every child has the right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.*
> 2. *Member governments shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.*[5]

Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted by the UK in 1996, says that children have the right to participate fully in cultural and artistic life. As well as being crucial to a child's development, creativity is a child's natural-born right, but many of those who work with young children feel that the arts world is elitist and unwelcoming – to themselves as the 'uninitiated' and, more importantly, to young children.

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[3] Boulton-Lewis, Gillian and Catherwood, Di (eds). *The Early Years: Development, Learning and Teaching* (Chapter 6). Australia Council for Education Research. 1995.

[4] Scottish Office Education Department. *Curriculum Assessment in Scotland – National Guidelines: Expressive Arts 5–14*. 1992. p. 1.

[5] UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. 1989.

Article 31 calls for a complete re-evaluation of how we relate to and provide for children. 'Children should be recognised as citizens who already have rights and responsibilities, not merely as tomorrow's adults in training. Article 31 calls for children to be recognised as full and equal participants in the country's cultural life.'[1]

The Article 31 Action Network has been set up to increase awareness of a child's right to participate in cultural life. It aims to represent the democratic rights of children and to bring about change in arts policy.

Some arts organisations have had children in mind since their foundation and have children's issues at heart; a number of these are listed in the resources section and case studies. More and more arts organisations are beginning to understand the magical possibilities of bringing the arts, artists and people of all ages into closer and more open relationships. With the new National Lottery funding, especially for young people (aged 0–25), the arts world is becoming more accessible under the New Directions programme.

[1] Article 31 Action Network, see list of contact organisations

Case Study

The Music of the Animals: Scottish Chamber Orchestra and Craigmillar Children's Project

The Craigmillar Children's Project (CCP), funded by the City of Edinburgh Council and the Diana, Princess of Wales, Memorial Fund, offers a range of services for children and their families in the Greater Craigmillar area of the city. The Music of the Animals project, whose aims were confidence building and language development, was one of a series of collaborations that the CCP carried out with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra (SCO). Nine children from the Prestonfield Nursery worked together with their teacher, a musician funded by the SCO and a project worker from the CCP.

At each weekly session the children explored the characteristics of a different animal through music and words. After warm-up activities, the children would, for example, move around the room to the beat of a drum, simulating an elephant's walk. The children each had percussion instruments on which they would beat out the syllables *el-e-phant*. They would then discuss elephants in response to the leaders' questions about habitat, eating birds, colour, size, etc. (since five of the children were bilingual, and four languages besides English were involved, language development was a key goal of the project). At the end of the session, the children made elephant paintings, which the next week they found mounted on the walls along with the words they had used to describe the animal. A continuing story, *The Giraffe who Could See to the End of the World*, was also built up, with children having to listen carefully and come in on cue, each representing a particular animal with a different instrument.

A number of other imaginative musical games were employed to build the children's confidence and sharpen their listening skills. The sessions concluded with a parents' day, when the children sang their hello song in all of the group's languages, and with a visit by children, parents and project leaders to Edinburgh Zoo, where the children were given the chance actually to handle some animals.

Parents' reactions to the workshops were enthusiastic, with several noting the increased confidence they could observe in their children, particularly in such areas as speaking with adults and group participation.

Creative healing

Taking part in creative activities offers a channel of communication and stimulates emotions. The resulting freedom of expression can encourage healing. It is well known that the arts can be used for therapeutic ends – the work of drama, dance, art and music therapists has been established for many years within health settings alongside other therapists. They use the healing aspects of their art forms for specific therapeutic purposes.

Artists also work within health settings with staff and patients to encourage a more generally beneficial or therapeutic effect. Their work is not intended to have any particular outcome or result, but to aid communication and make connections between staff and patients, to improve confidence and to lift spirits.

Children who have long-term or terminal illnesses may feel that they have lost control over their lives and their ability to make choices. Children in this situation may have strong emotions that they cannot articulate. The arts offer them the opportunity to make choices and take control over an area of their lives. Engaging in creative activity can help to release strong feelings.

Creativity and the arts have a role to play in the emotional development and personal growth of a child. Creative expression can be the key to helping a child come to terms with problems, experiences or trauma. For children who have little means of expression, and for those who are emotionally disturbed, creativity is an important tool with which to reach and inspire them as well as to extend their personal repertoire of expression. Emotional activity is essential to development and learning. Much of the success of using the arts comes from the fact that they are fun.

- Storytelling projects within hospital paediatric units have opened up channels of communication between children, staff and families, allowing children who were previously withdrawn to participate in the projects. Like other creative pursuits, stories are not finite – they keep on working in children's minds, changing, growing or refining, and, as one patient commented, 'They can stay with you whilst everyone else is asleep.' Through the sharing of stories, disturbing things in children's minds can be identified and dealt with or redirected.
- Skilled poetry workshops conducted with terminally ill children can help them to tap into their creativity, to find ways to cope with their situation.
- A variety of creative music skills can give children who have some form of malcoordination more body control and a basic improvement in their coordination, actually benefiting them physically, as well as mentally or spiritually.

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SECTION TWO: CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

A child-centred approach

> *The essence of the child-centred curriculum is that it is based on active learning, first-hand experience, the maximisation of potential and the needs of the individual child. Skills, knowledge and understanding are important, but children 'create' their own knowledge.*[8]

A child-centred approach gives children the opportunity to take charge of their own learning, in their own way and at their own pace. Children learn through exploring, enjoying and discovering for themselves, not only through inheriting the knowledge of adults. They develop through experimenting, exploring their own movements and engaging in 'open-ended' play.

Structured and adult-led activities in early years centres and schools are not likely to provide opportunities for creative development. They are certainly less likely to foster imaginative thought and problem-solving abilities than child-centred activities. Ideally, activities are initiated by the child or a group of children and supported or enhanced by an adult.

Imagination and play

> *Play that is well planned and pleasurable helps children to think, to increase their understanding and to improve their language and competence. It allows children to be creative, to explore and investigate materials, to experiment and test their conclusions ... such experience is important in catching and sustaining children's interests and motivating their learning as individuals and in cooperating with others.*[9]

It is generally accepted that children learn through play and that creative play is valuable, if not essential, for a child to develop. Children need to play to understand and learn about themselves and their surroundings.

From an early age, every child learns to make meaning using symbols rather than words. Children can relate to the world around them through their senses, using perception – concepts, ideas, images and thoughts – not logic. In offering a way for children to realise their own capabilities and make their own decisions, the arts, like play, offer opportunities for imagination, symbolisation and meaning-making. And these skills can be developed and extended beyond childhood.

If adults impose ideas on children, the children's imaginations might not be captured; they might end up doing something that adults want to see done, rather than what they want to do. Adult intervention should take place in order to advance creative play, not to restrict it or to take it over.

[8] Watt, Joyce, 'A Curriculum for Early Education', in *Reflections on Curriculum Issues – Early Education*, Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum, 1992

[9] *Starting with Quality*, The Rumbold Report, HMSO, 1990

Creative resources

> *Give them permission to engage in elaboration by providing a storehouse of supplies, materials and ideas and different ways to enter into creative arts processes. Young children are great imitators. It is up to you to make sure they are also great instigators.*[10]

In using a wide range of creative resources, children will discover that an end-result can be achieved in a number of ways – there is no one way that needs to be discovered. It is possible for any object to be used as anything else. A piece of silky material can be a veil, a fast-flowing river or a plate of spaghetti; boxes can represent anything from cars to planes, from rooms to hats, from buildings to monsters.

The options are endless, and children can adapt, be flexible and use their ideas and imaginations. In contrast, a toy car, for example, can only be a car.

Both representational toys and models and non-representational items are important in a child's development. Invisible, make-believe and pretend items are also always available and an important resource for children to use for play and improvisation.

[10] Edwards, Linda C., and Nabors, Martha, L., 'The Creative Arts process: What it is and What it is Not', in *Young Children*, NAEYC (USA), March 1993

Case Study

The Reggio Experience – The Hundred Languages of Children

During the summer of 1997, in London and Newcastle, there was an exhibition called *The Hundred Languages of Children*, which displayed the project work, creative arts and words of the children who attend pre-schools in and around the town of Reggio Emilia in northern Italy. In the exhibition catalogue one of the founders of the Reggio Emilia approach describes their work as being 'based on the image of a child who has enormous potential and who is subject to rights. The aim of this project is to promote children's education through the development of all their *languages*: expressive, communicative, symbolic, cognitive, ethical, metaphorical, logical, imaginative and relational.'[1]

The exhibition was called *The Hundred Languages of Children* after a poem by the late Loris Malaguzzi, founder of the Reggio approach. The poem suggests that the child has a hundred languages – but the school, society and the culture steal 99 of them. They:

separate the head from the body.
They tell the child to think without hands
to do without head
to listen and not to speak
to understand without joy
to love and to marvel
only at Easter and Christmas.
They tell the child:
that work and play
reality and fantasy
science and imagination
sky and earth
reason and dream
are things
that do not belong together.

It is no surprise that the Reggio Emilia early childhood centres have been a mecca for educators for many years, and much has been written about their approach. The activities that take place within the Reggio centres are, in essence, creative approaches using different art forms, but the word *arts* is not mentioned in any of this writing.

[1] *The Hundred Languages of Children*, Exhibition Catalogue (translated by Leila Gandini), 1996, p. 19

> *Young children (from birth to age six) are encouraged to explore their environment and express themselves through many 'languages', or modes of expression, including words, movement, drawing, painting, sculpture, shadow play, collage and music, leading children to surprising levels of symbolic skill and creativity.*[1]

The approach aims to foster children's intellectual development through 'a systematic focus on symbolic representation'. Although the creative work of the children is admired, the process is not described as art. However, the roles of the *atelierista* (the art teacher) and the *atelier* (the studio workshop space) are central to the settings.

How children benefit from the Reggio approach

- A forum for active and open debate between children results in more understanding, self-realisation, empathy, team and group work.
- Many different media are available – clay, paper, paints, natural materials, delicate beads, textiles and threads, transparencies, shadow puppets.
- The environment contains stimulating influences.
- In the *atelier* natural and delicate materials are laid out for children to select from.
- Children are given many opportunities to go out and look – close observation and 'being places' add to experiences.
- Children are encouraged to ask questions (for instance, watching workmen dig up the road and asking them about it).

Basic materials

It is important to give children access to a wide range of basic materials:

- natural things: twigs, shells, leaves, flowers, pebbles, seeds
- man-made materials: bubble-wrap, cotton-wool balls, string, rubber bands
- art materials and different kinds of paper and surfaces
- clay – perhaps you can request use of a kiln from a nearby school or local potter
- collage materials
- fabric for different textures.

The children can pick and choose their materials and develop their own creations, uses and ideas. Materials need not be expensive. Visit junk shops, charity shops, jumble and car-boot sales to gather dressing-up clothes and hats, suitcases, mirrors, curtains to make backdrops and theatre sets, props, pots and pans. Children and parents can help with collecting materials on walks and outings, gathering leaves for example.

[1] Edwards, Carolyn, Gandini, L. and Forman, George, *The Hundred Languages of Children: The Reggio Approach to Early Childhood Education*, Ablex Publishing (USA), 1993

Permanent equipment

Permanent pieces of equipment are effective but can be expensive.

- Mirrors offer young children different perspectives – positioned facing each other, they can provide infinite reflections or children can use them to observe their own facial expressions and make self-portraits.
- Children can use a light-table with transparent coloured papers to explore colour and shades.
- They can make impressions, shadows, puppets and cut-outs with an overhead projector. The same effects can be achieved by using a torch or lamp and a screen made from a white board, a light piece of fabric or a curtain.

Open-ended approaches

By starting off with an open-mind, offering a few ideas and nurturing projects that have grown from the children's ideas, an early years practitioner gives children the opportunity to learn creatively. Simple examples of open-ended approaches include:

- putting out big blobs of different coloured paints for finger- or toe-painting for very young children
- allowing improvisation in creative drama – staff can start this off from a story that is familiar to the children and then allow for growth and adaptation
- in movement and dance – asking the children to think of ways of being and moving
- in music and notation – asking children how they 'feel' sounds and different pieces of music and asking what they might look like if you could see the sounds on paper
- providing children with a huge sheet of paper (taped to the floor with masking tape) and various paints and art materials and allowing them to compose a group work in collaboration; themes for this can be discussed during circle or group
- examining the textures of natural materials – vegetables, leaves, shells – before experimenting with them in print-making.

How art contributes to child development

Schools suppress creativity. How can this be stated so categorically? The reasoning goes as follows: most young children are naturally curious and highly imaginative. Then, after they have attended school for a while, something happens. They become more cautious and less innovative. Worst of all, they tend to change from being participators to being spectators. Unfortunately, it is necessary to conclude from the investigations of many researchers that our schools are the major culprit.[1]

[1] Dacey, J. S., *Fundamentals of Creative Thinking* (1989), quoted in *Creative Expression and Play in the Early Childhood Curriculum*, 1993

The arts provide ways for early years practitioners to address the different learning styles and different abilities of each individual child. Children's development in drawing and painting has been mapped in detail from the ages of 18 months to five years and is available in many child development studies. These different stages of development can be consulted but do not need to be taken as gospel.

All children develop at different rates – it is not possible to link their development to specific ages. Certain activities might be too demanding for a child's developmental level; for instance, some musical instruments, including many woodwinds, cannot be played unless the child has reached the right stage of actual physical development.

An early years practitioner needs to acknowledge individual children's present levels of development before encouraging them to reach the next ones. Early years practitioners therefore need to strike a balance between setting the next challenge for particular children and assessing how rapidly they can advance.

A combination of senses is required for learning; not all children learn from listening; some may develop more readily through visual stimulation or other physical activity. Children have their own slower or faster learning rates, with their own different intelligences, special interests and talents. The full range of creative activities can:

- use all of the different senses and intelligences
- focus on and strengthen weak points whilst allowing the child to have fun
- help staff to identify individual children's gifts, their special skills, their favourite pastimes and the areas they need to develop.

With the UK's current preoccupation with literacy skills and child assessments, it is not surprising that some parents and staff members are anxious for children to produce evidence of formal educational achievements. Creative activities can offer children the opportunity to become absorbed in what the process has to offer, rather than how the product will be evaluated. They will gain the most benefit if there are opportunities to:

- share their work with other children and adults
- get involved in group negotiations and responses to pieces of work
- display every child's work, not just the pieces than an adult believes are good
- encourage group work, sharing and helping each other towards the same aim
- come up with solutions to a problem together in small groups and illustrate the solutions using a medium the group has agreed on.

Case Study

Scottish International Children's Festival

The Scottish International Children's Festival – one of the largest and liveliest events of its kind in the world – takes place each year during the third week of May. Formerly held in a tent village, the festival now occupies a number of theatres and other indoor venues in central Edinburgh, to ensure that visitors remain warm and dry at a time of year when the weather around Arthur's Seat is not always at its most cooperative.

The festival is a feast of performances, events and workshops for children of all ages, with plenty laid on for those at the younger end of the spectrum. Although the festival's focus is on the performing arts, with groups and individual performers o the highest standard coming from all over the world (and from Scotland too, of course), there are also workshops in crafts and the visual arts, story-telling events, book- and literature-centred workshops, as well as performance workshops – all of which emphasise direct participation by the children who attend, as do many of the performances themselves.

Scotland is truly fortunate to play host to this annual event, a counterpart for young people to the massive arts festival for grown-ups that takes over Edinburgh each August. The scale of the children's festival may be smaller, but the quality of the work it presents is very high indeed, and there is plenty of hands-on, feet-first artistic activity available to every child who attends.

The Scottish International Children's Festival provides an opportunity for every three-to fourteen-year-old in Scotland to see a lot of top-quality performances – and to participate in a large and varied number of creative learning experiences.

SECTION THREE: ART TO ORDER

Identical egg-box daffodils?

> *Each child deserves the opportunity to at least try out her original ideas. Each child deserves a teacher who honours flexibility and elaboration. Each child must be given the chance to find fluency in the process and originality in the final product. There is no right or wrong in artistic expression for the young child because art comes from within the child not from without. Creativity cannot be imposed from the outside by a well-meaning adult.*[14]

There are many positive examples of truly creative activities in early years centres and schools. However, the practice of using templates, stencils and step-by-step processes is still common in many schools and centres, regardless of pedagogical guidance that advises otherwise. Perhaps some staff feel that it is easier and more beneficial to use tried and tested methods from a craft or template book than to allow time for original creative activity to take place. Or perhaps there is a lack of time and resources, or worries about fulfilling specified requirements, or a lack of confidence in the staff members' own creative abilities. Most likely there is a combination of all of these things. For staff who have never felt comfortable taking part in the arts and who don't feel they are particularly creative, it is this lack of confidence that can become a barrier between aspirations and practice.

Not all early years practitioners can become accomplished dancers, singer, performers, musicians, visual artists, sculptors or writers. Many talented, creative and hard-working staff are already implementing good practice in their schools or centres. With an open-minded approach and a willingness to believe that creativity is crucial to a child's development, everyone can learn from developing some new methods. It is not difficult to spark a child's imagination – children are natural creators. The job of the early years practitioner is to set these imaginations in motion through creative planning, observation and offering advice and suggestions when required, giving children the space and time to develop their ideas and so enhancing their creative play.

Step by step

Step by step procedures that lead children towards a finished product may help them to follow directions or learn certain sequences, but they cannot be considered as creative activities. These procedures may have a role to play in early years centres and schools. They may teach children how to:

- use scissors
- build a sturdy structure
- make a book
- keep themselves occupied on a rainy afternoon.

[14] Edwards and Nabors, *The Creative Arts Process: What it is and What it is Not*, March 1993.

They do not, however, represent creative development. Many such step-by-step exercises involve an adult's perception of how an object or picture should look, how a piece of music should sound, how a dance should be danced, how a character should act. They allow little recognition of the importance of children's perceptions, their view of the world and their creative development.

Another disadvantage of product-orientated pieces of work is that they can lead children to believe that their work is never going to be as 'good' as that of the adult who has produced a perfect end product and is showing them how it is done.

Step-by-step projects that result in a room full of the same egg-box daffodils or identical crocodiles are, if anything, limiting. They create an adult's perception of what is 'right' or what looks 'good', not what a child might want to create. They develop adult skills, not creative skills.

Creativity offers the ability to produce something novel, something individual that is different from everyone else's. By using their own criteria, not externally imposed ones, children challenge their ideas, think creatively, question their choices and evaluate their outcomes by their own measure. This encourages the learning process.

The idea of making a token of love for a parent or carer is appealing, but is every child's token is the same and has been 'finished off' by a staff member, it is no longer the child's personal message to his or her own parent.

This issue does not apply only to the visual arts and crafts. The same problems arise when an early years centre or school is putting on a show or holding a concert. It cannot be assumed that all the children understand the story or what the performance is about and that they will relate to all or part of it. If staff choose the script, plan the dance steps, costumes and music in order to produce a nice-looking show for the parents, the experience may be a negative one for the children. The children might enjoy the process at the beginning, but if they do not understand the ideas behind the activity and aren't able to adapt the story, they may lose interest as rehearsals go on – sometimes repeating the same activities for several weeks. Using role-play, movement and free expression that develops from the children themselves will get more honest results. If parents understand how the children have worked to develop their own ideas, they may gain greater insight into the process from the children's point of view, even if the end product is less conventional.

Children need to experience things for themselves. And they need a range of these experiences and exposure to different forms of culture and different influences, from the Spice Girls to Debussy, folk to bhangra music. The customs of other countries and cultures are an important element of creative development.

Case Study

Never Too Young to Dance: Scottish Ballet

In June 1996 and December 1997, the Scottish Ballet's Education Unit organised a series of creative workshops for children aged three to five; these projects were developed in conjunction with works then part of the company's repertoire – *Four Seasons and Nutcracker*. All the nursery schools in Glasgow and a number of nearby areas were invited to participate, and schools that wished to take part were asked to return a form detailing what they hoped to achieve through their participation.

The sessions with the children were each led by a member of the Education Unit and a musician; the duration of the workshops was limited to 45 minutes in order to avoid overtaxing the children's energies and attention spans. As much as possible, the children were encouraged to exercise their own imaginations and explore their sense memories in carrying out activities rather than simply following explicit instructions given by the workshop leaders.

In the case of *Four Seasons*, the staged ballet (choreographed by Robert Cohan to Vivaldi's music) is an abstract portrayal of each of the seasons in turn. The children, when working on winter, for example, were encouraged to begin by 'experiencing' cold – first by pretending to put on hats, gloves and other warm clothing and then by shivering, shaking, rubbing their hands vigorously together and exploring other movements that are natural responses to cold temperatures. At this point, the leaders might move on to other more complex activities associated with winter, such as ice-skating, and again the exercise would advance both imaginatively and progressively: the children would be encouraged to explore balancing on one foot and then the other while leaning forward, then to take large gliding steps, slowly moving around the space. Turning might similarly be investigated. Finally, the children might be encouraged to put all the elements together, according to the dictates of their own imaginations and under the guidance of the leader, to create a skating dance (the children's individual responses to the music being played were, obviously, a key element of the entire process).

The participating centres were encouraged to enable their children to attend an actual performance of *Four Seasons*, and the nursery schools were provided with resource packs and cassettes of the music to enable their own staff to continue the dance work in the future.

How the children benefited from the project

- They were able to use their own sense memories physically to simulate past experiences, as well as imagined ones that, most probably, none of them had ever actually had.
- They experienced the expressive powers of movement.
- They were encouraged to integrate music, imagination and movement to produce an artistic creation that could be shared and in which they could take both pride and pleasure.
- They explored means of non-verbal expression, communicating their thoughts and feelings through rhythm and imaginatively controlled motion.

Create Dance – A Resource Pack

Maggie Singleton, a freelance dance consultant, has put together Create Dance, a resource pack of dance and movement activities to use with young children. Even if nursery staff members or teachers have no previous experience in movement work, the simple, clear instructions should enable them to help children create their own expressive dances. The pack includes a booklet of general instructions and a number of easy-to-use cards that provide guidelines for simple warm-up and body-awareness exercises, along with story cards, which contain ideas for helping children to create a dance based on the Scottish folk tale, *Assipattle and the Sea Serpent*. The pack also contains an audio cassette with music cued to the various warm-ups and the 'chapters' of the folk tale, as well as suggestions on props and scenery, ideas for other stories that can be used, simple musical instruments and further reading and general assistance in using expressive movement with young children.

SECTION FOUR: THE NEEDS OF EDUCATORS

Many adults have been 'educated out' of being imaginative and can quite often forget what it is like to let their imagination take flight. So it is important for children to be encouraged, and not put off, in the early stages of their development, when their imaginations function spontaneously. It is also important for those working with children to try to revisit their own imaginations.

Mary Jane Drummond, Lecturer in Education at the University of Cambridge School of Education, says: 'We can give life to our aspirations for children by providing, in the curriculum, both the "food" and the "exercise" that are vital for children's developing powers. Using this metaphor, we can see how in the Reggio approach, children are given both nourishing intellectual and emotional food and the space in which to exercise and strengthen their intellectual and emotional muscle.' Drummond suggests that early years staff 'try to emulate the professional confidence and self-respect of the Italian educators, who take themselves and their pedagogy very seriously indeed ... in their practice of documentation they act conscientiously and reflectively, continuously evaluating the quality of what they do. Like the children, they are given the time and space in which to speak to themselves and to think for themselves.'[1]

The Reggio workshop-like method is not a passive procedure. It is like a creative cooperative, a hothouse full of ideas and ways of realising those ideas in a creative manner. It encourages:

- group work
- conversation
- negotiation
- bouncing ideas off each other
- exploring a topic or idea that is picked up from one of the children's ideas or from the reaction of the children to an idea put forward by staff.

Staff members' own lack of positive experiences of the arts can contribute to their lack of confidence. They may find it difficult to relate to the arts and to creativity generally, on both a personal and a professional level.

One exercise to analyse your own perception of art and creativity is to ask yourself the following questions:

- What is the first experience of the arts that you remember? How old were you? Where were you? Who were you with?
- Was it a positive or a negative experience? Why was it positive/negative? How did it make you feel?
- What biases do you have about art and artists?
- How do you respond when you see art in your surroundings?
- What did you think the last time you visited a gallery or theatre?
- Have you read an interesting book or seen an interesting film about the life of a famous artist? Why was it interesting?
- What is your own creative background?

Observing a 'non-professional' creating something – and enjoying the process – can be the best way to raise confidence and encourage motivation – this could happen on a short course or in a training workshop.

[1] Drummond, Mary Jane, *Lessons from Reggio: An English Perspective*. Paper given at a conference on 'The Hundred Languages of Children', July 1997.

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Support for staff

Many practical and accessible resource materials are available to help in gaining creative confidence. Tapes and books offer practical support to the non-specialist, for instance:

- books of songs that can be sung to well-known tunes are perfect for those who do not read music
- for many songbooks, tapes are available that provide an accompaniment for singing, with and without a singer to demonstrate the songs.

Artists in centres and schools

Early years practitioners can invite artists, musicians, theatre companies, dance organisations, storytellers or poets to their school or early years centre to work with the children. Artists who have worked in centres or schools usually have experience of working with people with a range of abilities and ages. To work alongside professional artists and to share experiences with them can be reassuring.

Artists should offer good ideas and suggestions about how to develop work with the children after their 'residencies' have ended. Company members may hold a talk before a performance to explain or point out certain aspects of the story and again afterwards to ask the children what they thought and what they remember. This activity is just as relevant for the members of staff as it is for the children; it provides ideas for projects to keep the activities going after the artist or arts organisation has left.

The 'wiggle' factor

Children's reactions to new productions are tested by performing arts companies by using the 'wiggle' factor: how much movement and distraction the audience displays. If the 'wiggle' factor during a performance is low, it is a sign that the show will be a success.

Case Study

The Musical Garden: Giant Productions

Giant Productions, based in the Govan area of Glasgow, is an independent arts organisation for children set up initially with a grant from Glasgow City Council and given the task of coordinating events for children during the Glasgow City of Culture Year in 1990. Although Giant is noted chiefly for its theatrical productions staged in and around Glasgow, it uses all art forms in its work and is dedicated to promoting the arts for children throughout Scotland. In addition to its own projects, Giant provides training in using the arts for crèche staff and others involved in work with young children.

The Musical Garden is a project that giant developed in 1996; although aimed chiefly at the under-fives, it has been successful with older children as well and has toured to nursery schools, community festivals and gala days throughout Central Scotland. For the 'garden', Giant commissioned two musician/instrument makers to design and build several large (but portable) instruments of wood. The instruments are shaped in eye-appealing forms (a tree, a wishing well, a cow), and most are based on 'exotic' instruments from Africa, Latin American and Asia. The Marimba Fish, for example, is modelled on a Ugandan instrument and is in the shape of a large fish. The fish's bones are the 'keys', which are played by striking them with sticks, and the bones are brightly colour-coded according to the notes they produce.

The attractive, colourful designs of the instruments, together with the immense range of percussive sounds they produce, make them naturally attractive to young children, who need no encouragement to begin playing then; during workshops – usually led by professional musicians or music therapists – children also learn to listen to the playing of others and to make elementary music by coordinating and blending the sounds of their instruments. The garden has also been a successful catalyst for other activities, such as storytelling and dance/movement workshops.

How children benefit from the project

- They are encouraged to express themselves non-verbally, using elementary musical forms.
- They learn basic principles of cooperation with others: when they coordinate the sounds of their instruments with those being played by other children, they can make 'music'.
- They increase their appreciation for other countries' cultures when given simple explanations of the instruments' origins.
- The garden has proven to be an environment in which children of mixed abilities can participate in events together, with able-bodied children working easily alongside those who have special needs.

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Training

There is a general lack of training in the arts for early years practitioners, and in the training that does exist, the connection between creativity and child development that is evident in models such as Montessori, Steiner and the Reggio approach, which is recognised by psychologists such as Howard Gardner in his theory of multiple intelligences, is not always recognised. Making this connection is the first step in realising the learning potential of the arts for children and adults.

Staff members may be dissuaded from typing arts methods themselves for fear of failure, and if there is an art specialist – an art or music teacher, for example – at the school or centre, non-specialists staff may be happy to leave the art specialists. By collaborating with art specialists, staff members can improve their own art skills and their confidence.

Professional development training for early years practitioners is available from various membership bodies and further education institutions in the form of short courses. Also, some arts organisations offer training in their art form. Many arts organisations and cultural institutions offer INSET (in-service training) days, or the equivalent, for non-teachers, and these may be very useful for early years centre staff. Alternatively, community arts organisations can offer training in particular skills and methods in everything from community opera to playing percussion instruments, from batik to weaving. Most of these courses are subsidised and offer a way to enhance staff skills that can be shared throughout the entire centre or school.

SECTION FIVE: A BALANCING ACT

Process versus product

> *The focus of early childhood art must be on the process. We must look at how the children are expressing their originality and how they are elaborating on their original ideas.*[16]

When a child takes part in a creative activity in an early years centre or school, who is the end product for:

- the child who created it?
- the child's parent to put up at home?
- the centre or school, both to remind the children of their work and to look good on display in the public area?

These questions apply to theatre, role play or music much as they do to art and crafts. For example, do children understand why they are doing a certain play or learning a particular piece of music?

Below we look at how valuable the process of being creative is – beyond any value of the end product – and at how participation in the arts can be stimulating in and of itself, even if there is little or nothing to show for it. Creative activities with young children don't necessarily need to produce something as an end product. Dorothy Selleck described an example of this, based on her experience of the Reggio Emilia approach when she visited centres in northern Italy a number of years ago.

The event that Selleck describes took place outside the centre on a showery day. Selleck tells of watching a small group of toddlers, with the ends of long pieces of coloured paper stuffed down the backs of their trousers, strutting around through the puddles. They looked like peacocks swishing their brightly coloured tails backwards and forwards. The result, as the colour from the paper ran, was different coloured swirls on the ground – a cross between 'pavement' and 'performance' art. The toddlers 'became' the birds they were pretending to be, and they created colourful patterns on the ground. In their role play, the children were experiencing how it feels to be a bird and to have plumage, learning about experimenting with paper, colour and water, and communicating with each other about what they were doing. They had total control over these things, and they were totally absorbed in the activity.

There was virtually no advance preparation – except perhaps such knowledge of birds as the children already had – and, at the end of the session, the wet paper was bundled up and put into the bin. No end product was relevant or necessary; the children's experience and their enjoyment and freedom of expression were the end products.[17]

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[16] Edwards, Linda, C., and Nabors, Martha, L., 'The Creative Arts Process: What it is and What it is Not', in *Young Children*, NAEYC (USA), March 1993.

[17] Selleck, Dorothy, *Listening to and Communicating with Young Children Through their Representations, Arts and Activities*. Paper given at the conference 'Arts for the Under-Fives: Raising the Profile', West Yorkshire Playhouse, March 1995.

Case Study

Storyride – Finland

Storyride is part of a pre-school network in Finland, which is coordinated by the Finnish National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health. The aim of the Storyride project is to carry out research in order to develop quality teaching in pre-school and early education.

The network looks for different ways of listening to children in this stage of their development so that their initiatives, thoughts and interests are audible and visible in the daily routine of education and pedagogy. Storyride is just one project within this extensive network of organisations and individuals.

This is how the Storyride project works:

- A child or group of children tell a story of their own choice.
- The adult working with the children writes down the story word for word – exactly as it has been told.
- The story is then read aloud by the Storyride teacher and the children can make any changes they wish to the text and add pictures to illustrate it.
- The completed story is then sent to another group of children in a different early years centre, where the story is read aloud and the new listeners tell their own response story, using the same process.
- This 'new' story is sent back to the original group to be read out – and a story chain is created.

The Finnish Post Office has supported Storyride with stamps and other materials, and the project has received widespread media attention across the country.

Storyride allows those teachers working with children to discover new ways of developing their own educational skills. Through listening to the stories the professional gets fresh knowledge of the child or the group as a whole. The Storyride teachers write their observations in a diary. In addition, some of the story-telling situations are recorded with a tape-recorder, video or camera.

For their part, the children have the chance to express their thoughts, have an influential role and concentrate on matters they regard important. They can both listen and be heard. They get to perform, consider the thoughts of others and back up their own viewpoints. The significance of the children's being able to present their own ideas is reinforced by adults listening and writing down the children's thoughts. Every child's story or picture is worthy of correspondence.

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When talking about children's culture, we generally mean culture that is made *by adults* for children. Storyride collects children's self-made culture in the form of tales, stories, poems, narratives and pictures. The children's complex language, humour and manner of thinking take on visible shape. Children also get a chance to hear things that children are thinking about in other parts of the country, with different environments and experiences, finding out which things they have in common and which are different.

When their speech is written down, the children have their interest awakened by the differences and similarities between spoken and written language. The process also makes the communicative function of language and text much clearer.

Parents and grandparents of the Storyride children now get involved in the story-making, and this has led to a new form of cooperation between early years centre and home. The Storyline teachers have complied numerous newsletters and magazines containing some of the stories and illustrations, and these are sent to the participants' homes.

SECTION SIX: THE NEEDS OF PARENTS

A token for parents – taking work out of context

Learning begins at home, and it is important to reinforce the continuity between home and early years centre. It is often thought that it is crucial for children to take work home because it creates a dialogue between nursery and home, giving satisfaction to both – and this may be important for reasons that are not directly related to the creative process.

There is an alternative way of looking at this issue. Children may take work home from an early years centre or school, and their parents look at it, comment on it and put it on display. The piece of work shows how the child is getting on and developing and represents a gift to the parent or carer. However, unless a staff member has explained the idea behind the activity and the aims and skills involved in producing it, then the work could be misunderstood because it is out of context.

In Reggio Emilia, they believe that work loses its meaning, and its importance as part of the learning process, when it is taken out of the setting. Work should not be taken home by the children because it is too important to be removed from the environment in which it was created. If it is no longer available for the children to refer to, or is no longer a part of what is going on in the learning setting, the children cannot look around and see their own development.[8]

In the Reggio centres, the art work being displayed is still being 'read'; both children and staff benefit from revisiting the children's work and developing their thoughts on it. The parents in Reggio Emilia are very involved in the centres, working together with the staff members and artists to further their children's development, and so bringing work home does not have the same significance. At the end of a term or year, Reggio children discuss and choose a piece of their work to take home.

This method may seem restrictive, and definitely has space implications for the early years centre or school. However, it highlights some key issues:

- whether every piece of work is an isolated project that has no further significance once it is finished, or whether it is an important part of a continuing process of development
- the need to consider who the ultimate beneficiary should be of every different project or topic
- whether every creative activity has to have an end product to be shown off or sent home
- whether children and staff can use work that is displayed in the setting as a source from which to develop, grow and move on.

[8] Edwards, Linda, C., and Nabors, Martha, L., 'The Creative Arts Process: What it is and What it is Not', in *Young Children*, NAEYC (USA), March 1993

Involving parents

Getting children's parents involved in a project can help to develop and improve communication between parents and the centre or school and can increase the enjoyment for the children.

Good communication with parents is essential, and if new, 'more creative' projects are planned, parents should be informed or 'warned'. If the centre is planning to do a series of activities that will not result in an end product, it should be explained to parents beforehand what the aims and learning outcomes will be. A parents' evening should be held before an event to talk about expectations, or at the culmination of a big project to talk about outcomes and how the children have benefited.

Case Study

Encouraging Literacy in Young Children

The Scottish Book Trust is an independent charity promoting the pleasures of reading and books to people of all ages. The Trust publishes a range of resources to help encourage young people to read widely and with enthusiasm, including *Beginning with Books*, a booklet for carers and parents of very young children. The Trust also maintains a reference library and database containing information on books for children; this invaluable resource provides the basis for much of the organisation's work with teachers, librarians and young children themselves.

Opening the Book is an independent training and consultancy organisation that encourages libraries, writers and readers all over the UK to connect reading to people's lives. Opening the Book has several suggestions for arranging a children's book corner in an early years centre or school or library:

- Offer simple choices, like blue, red or green books or books about families, toys or animals.
- Make sure to include pictures and words from readers in the display.
- Offer choices based on subject matter and appropriate to what a child might feel like reading – scary, safe, silly, sensible, messy or clean.
- Try to display pictures of individual children holding books they have chosen, and extend this to include adults: older brothers and sisters, grandparents, the lollipop lady, a bus driver.
- Get all of the children to choose their favourite picture book, bedtime book, story book or funny book, and display these, including photographs of the children participating.
- Display one book prominently and explain that any of the children can take the 'special' book if they replace it with another book that they enjoyed.

Members of staff can involve parents in such projects and can offer them advice about reading aloud to their children: how fast to go, when to stop, what questions to ask.

SECTION SEVEN: ENVIRONMENT AND SETTING

Most early years centres and schools have space for children's work to go up on the walls and for displays of words or topic information, photographs and objects. These displays are an important element of the learning environment.

There are innovative ways of displaying children's work. For instance, the children could visit a local art gallery and then think about how they would like to see their own work exhibited – what combination of pictures and models, words and signs, and in what kind of space.

By changing the layout of the environment within a setting, it is possible to achieve an alternative focus for children. For example:

- enhance the book corner with photos and objects
- place mirrors or light in a play corner to encourage different types of creative play experiences for the children
- involve the children in working together to plan a new layout for a favourite play area, inside or outside.

Installation art work

Using ordinary materials, it is possible to make a dramatic transformation of a space. The aim of installation art is to impose materials on a space and change the space in some way, working either with or against the shape of the room to transform it. Opportunities for doing large-scale work in an early years centre or school may be limited, but it might be possible to use a section of a room. The sort of materials used can set the scene for stories to emerge – for example, blue fabric might suggest a watery environment; white paper and silver foil could make a snow scene.

- Large rolls of paper are perfect for quick and easy space transformation.
- Large sheets of bubble wrap (ask local companies if they have any spare packing materials) can create a space-age feel.
- Criss-cross string around a room, above head height, and attach materials with bulldog clips or clothes pegs, for example cr. ıpled bits of paper for clouds, with muslin draped over and strings hanging from the criss-crossed string with clips or pegs attached for children to add to the landscape.

(Thanks to Theatre-rites for these installation ideas.)

Displaying work

- Place work at a child's eye-level as much as possible and rotate the work around the room so that it can all be seen.
- Don't use only wall space – use windows, doors, ceilings and shelving to hang things from.
- Use original framing techniques – boxes, polystyrene trays, lids, cardboard tubes or light wood.

- Tape-record descriptions of the children's own work (you could make a walking tour with taped descriptions of everyone's work – as a gallery or museum does).
- Hold exhibitions of the children's work in your local shopping centre, doctor's surgery, community centre and so on.

The Blackie Community Arts Centre in Liverpool has an exciting approach to displaying creative work. For instance they have constructed a set of white box shelves in varied shapes and size to frame everyone's work together to form a whole. The complete view is visually effective, whatever the age and skill of the individual artists whose work make up the different contributions. Most of their projects involve simple yet creative processes that can be accomplished by people of any age. The whole philosophy behind their work is one of cooperation and not of work for personal glory. In their group projects, which are truly intergenerational, if young children need help from adults, the children themselves direct what the adult does; it is not done for them.

The whole environment of a setting is significant in guiding children's learning; it should provide an atmosphere in which children feel comfortable enough to take intellectual risks. The environment should encourage children to experiment and learn – from both successful and unsuccessful attempts – to be inspired and to try again.

In an ideal world, great attention would be paid to the architecture and environment of early years centres and schools:

- premises would be light and spacious
- children would be able to work with natural materials and delicate objects much more than with manufactured toys and equipment.
- a well-equipped studio, staffed by trained artists, would be the hub of the setting, being used by the children as a creative and cooperative work space and by the staff to record and document the children's development.

SECTION EIGHT: GETTING ART TO COME TO YOU – ARTISTS-IN-RESIDENCE

After reading case studies about getting an artist-in-residence in an early years centre or school, you may want to find out how to go about it:

- where you should go to find an artist with experience of working with young children
- how you can go about finding a project
- how you should manage the project.

It is necessary to look at practical issues such as space, time, follow-up, evaluation and how to make sure that everyone involved has the same expectations – the artist, the children, the staff members and the funder.

The Scottish Arts Council (SAC) is eager to encourage artists-in-residence projects in early years centres and schools, and for advice, information and assistance in planning a project, the SAC is an excellent place to begin.

Case Study

Stimulating Creativity – Highlands & Islands Arts – Artists-in-Residence

As its name suggests, Inverness-based Highlands & Islands Arts (HI-Arts) is a charity dedicated to promoting the arts throughout Scotland's largely rural Highlands and Islands region. In 1997–98, with funding from the SAC and the development agency Highlands and Islands Enterprise, HI-Arts conducted a pilot project called Stimulating Creativity that enabled local professional artists to work with childcare groups in four areas, each of which focused on a specific art form – drama in Orkney, classical music in Skye and Lochalsh, traditional music in Ross and Cromarty and the visual arts in Argyll and the Islands. The pilot phase was highly successful – in all, about 150 children, childcarers, playleaders and artists participated and, from their experiences, contributed to an arts-and-childcare strategy for the area. Hi-Arts is now seeking funding to enable Stimulating Creativity to continue for a further three years and on a wider scale throughout the Highlands and Islands.

How the children benefited from the project

- They developed skills related to the art forms in which they were involved – pitch, rhythm, colour, and language, for example.
- They developed personal skills such as leadership and cooperation with others.
- They increased their own sense of self-worth and achievement.
- They had a degree of access to artistic activity that is often unavailable in rural areas.
- They were able to express their individuality in a participant-led, open-ended setting that encouraged experimentation and creative exploration.
- They had fun and were able to experience creative play together with adults.

However, it should also be pointed out that the children were not the only ones to benefit from Stimulating Creativity. Many of the childcarers and playleaders involved gained confidence about their own abilities to work with the arts as a result of the experience (training sessions were also held to enhance the participation of both carers and artists). The artists found both new opportunities for employment and the chance to develop the additional skills required for dealing with very young children in a workshop-like setting.

(For those wishing to initiate similar activities in their own areas, an advisory leaflet, video and full report on Stimulating Creativity are available for a small charge from HI-Arts.)

A number of useful books and reports offer advice about how to get an artist-in-residence. These are listed in the Further Reading section on page 43. You may also be able to get information and assistance from your local authority.

SECTION NINE: GOING OUT TO SEE ART

Not just participation

The involvement of young children as an arts audience has its own importance. The wonder and joy of being involved in a theatre/puppet/music production as an audience, or as a visitor to a gallery or sculpture park, cannot be overestimated. If children are absorbed, they will take vivid memories away with them and revisit these memories as and when they need and want to. The experience can be as long lasting and have as strong an effect as when a child participates directly in the arts.

- Arts organisations provide activities around the actual performance or exhibition, including teachers' packs filled with a range of artistic and educational project ideas in relation to the play or puppet show.
- Musicians may work with the children after a performance, letting them touch and play the instruments, talking about where the instruments come from, their cultural tradition, how they are made, how to play them and how it feels, and what you need to learn in order to master the instrument.
- In galleries, museums and visual art exhibitions, as well as viewing the work, children are sometimes allowed to touch and feel objects on display. More and more galleries have some form of interactive exhibit that is especially for young visitors.

These activities are an added bonus to the experience of a child being in a gallery or watching a performance. The professional work of art that they experience is the key and is central to other activities that are devised by experienced arts and education specialists to complement the main work and to extend the learning opportunities involved.

Participation in the arts is important for a child's learning – but so are the sensations that take place whilst witnessing a piece of professional art. Another effect of this is that children learn how to be part of an audience, to experience something as a group, to laugh or cry with others and to share the same emotions at the same time. This experience encourages empathy and an understanding of fellow human beings. Being part of an audience is an experience in itself.

Professional children's theatre companies are keen to produce engaging and appropriate work, but they don't want to do just 'nice' or 'easy' productions or pantomime. There is usually an element of learning in their work, whether it is to do with the environment, feelings and emotions or issues such as birth and death.

Among the many good reasons to take children to arts events, exhibitions or performances are:

- to learn about different art forms or cultures
- to experience being part of an audience
- to work with artists and performers in their own setting environment
- to give them creative ideas to use in their early years centres
- to give them a sense of connection between looking at someone else's work and exercising their own creativity.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Arts institutions and companies that run programmes specifically for groups of young visitors are listed in the contacts sections. This list is by no means complete. To find out about what is available in your area, you should get in touch with your local authority's arts or cultural services department.

Case Study

Children's Picture Walk: Paisley Museum and Art Galleries

Sometimes, simple-sounding ideas can prove highly effective in sparking children's interest in and involvement with works of art.

The Keeper of Art at the Paisley Museum and Art Galleries noticed that, when she took her own two-year-old along on visits to galleries, the toddler's reaction tended towards boredom. Determined to do something to benefit young children who are dragged around museums on rainy days by adult carers (and something for the carers as well!), the keeper hit upon the idea of hanging a few pictures at child's eye level, some distance below the height at which most of the pictures in the Paisley Museum and Art Galleries are hung.

The project was carried out with a good deal attention to the needs of young museum-goers. Since very young children cannot be expected to respect the 'no-touching' rules that older children must learn, only pictures protected by glass or Perspex were selected for the Children's Picture Walk – thereby freeing adult carers from worries about little fingerprints harming the artworks. Paintings were chosen with careful attention to colour and content, concentrating upon children, animals and other subjects with strong appeal to young children. Finally, suggested questions were hung near the pictures, to provide adult carers with ideas for stimulating their young charges' interest in a given work of art (for example, near the painting of a little girl: 'Do you know someone like this? Where did she get the flowers?')

Now the keeper plans to work with the museum's designer to develop the project further, perhaps displaying children's artwork among 'adult' paintings on a similar theme. The young artist's work should be mounted on open-access display boards. This expansion would be quite inexpensive for the museum, but, at the same time, would give young viewers a real sense of the importance and value of their own artistic efforts.

PUBLISHERS SPECIALISING IN MATERIALS FOR CHILDREN

A. & C. Black's music books combine fun with learning. *Three Singing Pigs – Making Music with Traditional Stories* by Kaye Umansky is excellent, since no music-reading ability is required, and familiar stories are combined with new ones plus songs, parts for percussion and ideas for composition. Another favourite is *Okki-tokki-unga – Action Songs for Children.*

Playsongs Publications offer music books and cassettes/CDs for children and their carers. They have story songbooks that incorporate lap games, dances, action songs and lullabies, rhymes and musical activities, funny and lyrical songs and stories with sing-along rounds and part-songs included.

Dorling Kindersley have a good collection of well-illustrated fiction and reference materials for children. A good CD-ROM for the 4+ age range is *The Jolly Post Office*, which is full of posting activities and games plus opportunities to design stamps and stationery whilst sharing ideas with children all over the world through an Internet link.

Oxford Reading Tree produce playscripts that introduce the conventions of drama with scope for non-speaking parts and sound effects and are ideal for group or individual reading; talking books available on CD-ROM come with notes to support information technology teaching. The poetry, rhyme and analogy books are especially good to support children's knowledge of letters, sounds and rhyme patterns plus reading and spelling skills.

Details for these publishers:

A. & C. Black (Publishers) Ltd
35 Bedford Row
London WC1R 4JH
Tel: 0171 242 0946
Fax: 0171 831 8478

Playsongs Publications
39 Byne Road
London SE26 5JF
Tel/fax: 0181 778 0708

Dorling Kindersley Ltd
9 Henrietta Street
London WC2E 8PS
Tel: 0171 836 5411
Fax: 0171 836 7570

Oxford Reading Tree
Oxford University Press
Educational Supply Section
Saxon Way West
Corby
Northants NN18 9ES
Advice Line: 01865 267881
Orders and inspection copies: 01536 741519

FURTHER READING

Association of Professional Theatre for Children and Young People, *Directory*, 1997

Boudry, Brants and Vandenbroeck, *Stimulating Creativity in Children: Is it Feasible?* Seminar paper given at Workshop Athens, 1996

British Association for Early Childhood Education, *Early Education*, Issue No 21, including seminar paper 'Who decides the meaning of "quality" in early childhood education?'

Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, *The Arts in Schools*, 1982

Cox, Miranda, *Article 31 – Children and the Arts – Creative Action for the Next Millennium*, Play-Train – The Article 31 Action Network, 1997

Crichton and Greenland, *First Moves – Movement Work with Very Young Children: A Handbook for Play Workers, Nursery Workers and Teachers*, Jabadao, 1994

Curtis, Audrey, *A Curriculum for the Pre-School Child – Learning to Learn*, NFER–Nelson Publishing Company, 1986

Donohue, Keith, *Imagine! Introducing Your Child to the Arts*, National Endowment for the Arts, Washington, DC, 1997

Dow, Sylvia, *Now to Create: Arts and Education in Partnership*, Scottish Arts Council, 1994

Edwards, Carolyn, Gandini, Lella, and Forman, George, *The Hundred Languages of Children: The Reggio Emilia Approach to Early Childhood Education*, Ablex Publishing, New Jersey, 1993

Gardner, Howard, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, Basic Books, New York, 1983

Goldberg, Lillian, *The Touchstone Study: Bringing the Arts to the School*, Touchstone Center Publications, 1984

Hughes, Anne, and Ellis, Sue, *Writing it Right? Children Writing, 3–8*, Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum, 1999

Hyder, Kenway and Roels, *On Equal Terms: Ways to Involve Parents in Early Years Settings*, Starting Points 26, The National Early Years Network, 1997

Isenberg and Jalongo, *Creative Expression and Play in the Early Childhood Curriculum*, MacMillan, New York, 1993

Jackson, Tony, *Learning Through Theatre*, Routledge, 1993

Lewis and Hamilton, *The Butterfly in My Pocket: On Teaching the Imaginative Experience* (Vol 11, No. 1 of the *Issues for Educators* monograph series), School of Education Queens College of the City University of New York, 1987

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Lewis, Richard, *When Thought is Young: Reflections on Teaching and the Poetry of the Child*, New Rivers Press, 1992

Ministry of Education, New Zealand, Te Whariki, *Draft Guidelines for Developmentally Appropriate Programmes in Early Childhood Services*, Learning Media Ltd, 1993

National Society for Education in Art and Design in association with Visual Impact Publications, *Early Years Number 1 – Teaching Your Children Art: A Handbook for Teachers and Parents – Line, Shape and Drawing*, 1996

Neaum and Tallack, *Good Practice in Implementing the Pre-School Curriculum*, Stanley Thornes, 1997

Riihel, Monika, *How do we Deal with Children's Questions? Semantic Aspects of Encounters between Children and Professionals in Child Institutions*, The National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health (STAKES), Helsinki, 1996

Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum, *Early Years Education Resource Guide*, 1998

Scottish Consultative on the Curriculum, *Teaching for Effective Learning: A Paper for Discussion and Development*, 1997

Scottish Office (HM Inspectors of Schools), *A Curriculum Framework for Children in their Pre-school Year*, 1997

Scottish Office Education Department, *Curriculum and Assessment in Scotland – National Guidelines: Expressive Arts, 5–14*, 1992

Sharp and Dust, *Artists in Schools: A Handbook for Teachers and Artists*, NFER-Nelson, 1997

Thompson, Christine Marm, *The Visual Arts and Early Childhood Learning*, The National Art Education Association, 1995

CONTACT DETAILS FOR ORGANISATIONS MENTIONED IN THIS PUBLICATION

Article 31 Action Network
PLAY-TRAIN
31 Farm Road
Sparkbrook
Birmingham B11 1LS
Tel: 0121 766 8446

The Blackie
Great Georges Community Cultural Project
Great George Street
Liverpool L1 5EW
Tel: 0151 709 5109

Collins Gallery
University of Strathclyde
22 Richmond Street
Glasgow G1 1XQ
Tel: 0141 548 4145
Fax: 0141 552 4053
Contact: Laura Hamilton, Curator

Craigmillar Children's Project
Craigmillar Primary School
Harewood Road
Edinburgh EH16 4NT
Tel: 0131 661 3516
Fax: 0131 652 2073
Contact: Claire Mulholland

Create Dance Resource Pack
Maggie Singleton
Tel: 0141 339 8647
E-mail: msingleton@sol.co.uk

Giant Productions
Big Hands Centre
7 Water Row
Glasgow G51 3UW
Tel: 0141 445 6000
Fax: 0141 445 4446
Contact: Karen Gault, Programmer

Opening the Book
181 Carleton Road
Pontefract
West Yorkshire WF8 3NH
Tel: 01977 602188
Contact: Rachel Van Riel or Olive Fowler

Paisley Museum and Art Galleries
High Street
Paisley PA1 2BA
Tel: 0141 889 3151
Fax: 0141 889 9240
Contact: Jane Kidd, Keeper of Art

Reggio Children S.r.l.
Via Guido da Castello, 12
42100 Reggio Emilia
Italy
Tel: +39 0522 455416
Fax: +39 0522 455621
Contact: Annamaria Mucchi

The Scottish Arts Council
12 Manor Place
Edinburgh EH3 7DD
Tel: 0131 226 6051
Fax: 0131 225 9833
Contact: Sylvia Dow

Scottish Ballet
261 West Princess Street
Glasgow G4 9EE.
Tel: 0141 331 2931
Fax: 0141 331 2629
Contact: Lorna Pickford, Education Unit

Scottish Book Trust
137 Dundee Street
Edinburgh, EH11 1BG
Tel: 0131 229 3663
Fax: 0131 228 4293
Contact: Lindsey Fraser

Scottish Chamber Orchestra
4 Royal Terrace
Edinburgh EH7 5AB
Tel: 0131 557 6802
Fax: 0131 557 6933
Contact: Fiona Vacher, Development Director

Scottish International Children's Festival
5th Floor
45a George Street
Edinburgh EH2 2HT
Tel: 0131 225 8050
Fax: 0131 225 6440
Contact: Tony Reekie, Director

Stimulating Creativity
Highlands & Islands Arts
Bridge House
20 Bridge Street
Inverness IV1 1QR
Tel: 01463 244271
Fax: 01463 244331
Contact: Shona Arthur or Linda Thompson

Storyride
c/o STAKES National Research and Development
Centre for Welfare and Health
Children Research
PO Box 220
FIN-00531 Helsinki
Finland
Tel: +358 9 3967 2151
Fax: +358 9 3967 2227
Contact: Liisa Karlsson

Theatre-rites Ltd
23 Windsor Road
London N7 6JG
Tel/fax: 0171 686 0771
Contact: Penny Bernard, Artistic Director

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR OTHER GROUPS AND ORGANISATIONS

The Arts Is Magic
St Andrew's College
Duntocher Road
Glasgow G61 4QA
Tel: 0141 943 1489
Fax: 0141 943 1584

Bridgeton Music Project
Susan Fotheringham, Head Teacher
Queen Mary Street Nursery School
20 Queen Mary Street
Bridgeton
Glasgow G40 3BB
Tel: 0141 554 7658

Children in Scotland
Princes House
5 Shandwick Place
Edinburgh EH2 4RG
Tel: 0131 228 8484
Fax: 0131 228 8585

The Happy Gang
13 Redford Drive
Edinburgh EH13 0BL
Tel/fax: 0131 441 4491

Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum
Gardyne Road
Broughty Ferry
Dundee DD5 1NY
Tel: 01382 455053
Fax: 01382 455046

The Scottish Storytelling Centre
The Netherbow Arts Centre
43–45 High Street
Edinburgh EH1 1SR
Tel: 0131 557 5724
Fax: 0131 557 5224

Wee Stories Theatre for Children
Unit 106
Stirling Enterprise Park
Players Road
Stirling FK7 7RP
Tel: 01786 449162

Note: The report, *Now to Create: Arts and Education in Partnership*, published by the Scottish Arts Council in 1994, contains an extensive list of arts organisation in Scotland that work with children and young people, although some of the listings are now out of date.

Scottish
Consultative
Council *on the*
Curriculum

Gardyne Road
Broughty Ferry
Dundee DD5 1NY
Tel: 01382 455053
Fax: 01382 455046

Email: reception@sccc.ac.uk
http://www.sccc.ac.uk/

Price: £3.75

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